1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

he will be allowed to use the drums in the house; later he will buy himself a drum of his own. No payment is taken for the tuition; but when the novice later performs at ceremonies or feasts, he will send his former teacher a small gift of money or food. The drums are made by the woodworkers on the river, who are alone in the position to obtain the suitable wood. One large drum costs 10*s*. The drummers themselves cover the drum and provide the goatskin for the diaphragm.

But all this is a thing of the past. To-day apprentices are hardly ever taken. The drummers, like so many other Nupe craftsmen, complain bitterly about the bad times. Formerly, they told me, they used to be paid 6*s*. to 8*s*. a night; to-day they receive 3*s*. for the night or, for one 'song' (played, for example, at a family feast), one kola-nut. This decline appears to be due to two factors: first, to the impact of Mohammedanism and the gradual disappearance of rituals and ceremonies in which drumming formerly played a prominent part and the songs of which were stored in the memory of the village drummers; and second, to the spreading of fashions from the capital, and the competition of the more 'refined', famous Bida drummers and musicians. The organization of the village drummers has survived only in the names of the guild ranks. The drummers, who once devoted only their spare time to farming, are to-day mainly farmers and carry on their old profession only as a sideline.

In Bida drumming and music were never tied to the narrow scope of limited traditional occasions; nor was the development of the artistic style rigidly hemmed in ritual. Both the profession and the style were allowed to develop freely, and the result is an impressive variety in artistic production and in its social counterpart, the organization of the craft. The Bida practice also introduces a completely novel element into the traditional craft, namely, music and dancing executed by professional women dancers and singers. A number of performers, drummers and women singers (who rarely come of one family or household) associate with one another, and form themselves into a 'band' or 'company'. In this form they become known, are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country, sometimes even going abroad to other large towns in Nigeria where Nupe music always finds an appreciative public.[1] In constant co-operation the 'company' builds up its special 'repertory' and evolves its individual style. There are several such 'companies' in Bida, each with its special repertory, style, and technique. They are known by the name of their leader, or by the name of the style in which they have specialized. Thus we find the group of the drummer Sogba, or the group of the woman singer Fati, or a group called *zazóro* (lit. 'new man'), so called because it performs in a style only developed since the days of the 'new men', i.e. the British. One or the other 'company' is known to be patronized by a certain noble family and will be summoned at every occasion when the services of drummers and dancers are required, a name-giving ceremony, a wedding, or an age-grade festivity. Certain drummers even enter a kind of *bara* relation with a nobleman

[1] I met a company of Bida drummers and women singers, whom I had known in Bida, in Lagos, where they were 'on tour'.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

whose patronage they seek. Often the patron may order special compositions from 'his' drummers, for example, a personal drum signal, called *take*, for a newly acquired nobility rank, or a song of praise on himself, or a friend or relation.

Between these different groups there is no co-operation. Each group is, economically, a closed unit. All earnings are divided equally among the members. This division of the income has no bearing on factors of family or household organization. Individual group-members may contribute to the expenses of their own families; but the 'company' is purely a professional association, to which the categories *efakó* and *bucá* do not apply. Professional and family concerns are, in fact, kept strictly separate, occasionally the two overlap, and we find a woman singer and a drummer of the same 'company' who are man and wife; but just as often a drummer has a wife, and the woman singer a husband, who are not members of the 'company', nor even of the profession.

Drumming in Bida is a full-time occupation (sometimes a drummer practises a little farming besides, but this is very infrequent). Each company regularly adopts new members as old ones retire. The novices serve their apprenticeship as minor performers of the 'company', until they become fully fledged members of the craft. Sons of drummers mostly follow the paternal profession; but many singers and dancers do not come from families whose women have practised this profession previously. Music and dancing in Bida is a vocation rather than a profession. The free competition of talent and individuality rather than family tradition determines professional success, and thus the professional association in which the craft organizes itself. Indeed the profession of Bida musicians and drummers represents the only instance in the economic organization of the country of a free association purely on a business basis, and without the support of the framework of kinship and hereditary tradition.

With regard to the profession of drummers and musicians town and country have exchanged roles: we find the closed and hereditary professional group (though of much smaller scale than guild organization proper) in the village, and the detached individual groups of craftsmen in Bida. But the principle of hereditary craft organization has remained essentially the same. We need only read village chief for king, and village community for state, and we understand the new situation. For the drummers, as we have seen, are as essential to the corporate life of the village as are the craftsmen proper to the political life of the state. In town-life, on the other side, drummers and musicians have no traditional duties assigned to them which concern the common interests of the group at large. Indeed the more varied social life of Bida, and the appreciation of new fashions and special styles typical of the cosmopolitan town, foster that spirit of originality and inventiveness which here as in all craft-work counteracts efforts at a closer co-operative organization.